

REMARKS

The examiner rejected original claims 1-9, 22, 25-27, 30-32, 34, 37, 38, 41, 42, 46, 47, 50-52, 54, 57-61, 66-71, 75, 77, 81, 83, 85-88, 94-97, 117-126, 133, 134, 137, 138, 141, 142, 145-150, 153-175. Applicant respectfully submits that it is believed that claims 1 through 175 as originally submitted are allowable for issuance as an U.S. Letters Patent. However, due to concerns of expedience, claims 1-175 are cancelled to expedite the issuance of an U.S. Patent at this time.

Applicant respectfully submits new claims 176 through 274. The new claims are rewritten versions of original claims 1 through 176. The new claims include eight independent claims: 176, 202, 206, 231, 235, 245, 255, and 265. It is respectfully submitted that each of the new independent claims is in condition for allowance and therefore all of the dependent claims are allowable.

New independent claim 176 is original claim 10 rewritten in independent form. The examiner acknowledged in the Office action that claim 10 rewritten to include the base claim and all intervening claims in independent form to be allowable. New claim 176 does not include the limitations of original claims 3 and 4 which are not necessary for patentability as demonstrated by the cited prior art and examiner's comments in regard to original claims 68 through 116.

New independent claim 202 is original claims 1, 3-7, and 10 rewritten in independent form. New claim 202 is in condition for allowance for the same reasons as new claim 176.

New independent claim 206 is original claim 11 rewritten in independent form. The examiner acknowledged in the Office action that claim 11 rewritten to include the base claim and all intervening claims in independent form to be allowable. New claim 206 does not include the limitations of original claims 3 and 4 which are not necessary for patentability as demonstrated by the cited prior art and examiner's comments in regard to original claims 68 through 116.

New claim 231 is original claims 1, 3-7, and 11 in independent form. New claim 231 is in condition for allowance for the same reasons as new claim 206.

New claim 235 is original claim 72 rewritten in independent form. The examiner acknowledged in the Office action that claim 72, in independent form, is in condition for allowance.

New claim 245 is original claim 74 rewritten in independent form. The examiner acknowledged in the Office action that claim 74, in independent form, is in condition for allowance.

New claim 255 is original claim 127 rewritten in independent form. The examiner acknowledged in the Office action that claim 127, in independent form, is in condition for allowance.

New claim 265 is original claim 128 rewritten in independent form. The examiner acknowledged in the Office action that claim 128, in independent form, is in condition for allowance.

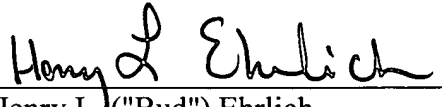
Applicant respectfully submits that new claims 176 through 274 are in condition for allowance. It is requested that examiner withdraw the rejections and mail a Notice of Allowance for claims 176 through 274.

The examiner is invited to call the below named representative to expedite the issuance of this application as an U.S. Letters Patent.

Respectfully submitted,
WINSTEAD SECHREST & MINICK P.C.

May 26, 2004
DATE

Correspondence Address:
Winstead Sechrest & Minick P.C.
910 Travis Street, Suite 2400
Houston, Texas 77002-5895


Henry L. ("Bud") Ehrlich
Reg. No.: 39,663
Phone No.: 713-650-2778
Fax No.: 713-650-2400